Constitution of an Apex Body for managing maritime affairs

319. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention has been drawn to a news-item published in the Hindustan Times dated 1st November, 2001 captioned "Pant: Wake up to the danger from the sea";

(b) whether it is a fact that Government are not fully appreciating "Maritime Security" in comparison to "land oriented security" because of departmental overlapping of jurisdiction, confusion and inability to respond to fast evolving situation; and

(c) if so, whether Government propose to form an 'Apex Body' to manage maritime affairs including vast new strategic frontiers on the seas?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERN ANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. The Government is sensitive and appreciative of the requirements of maritime security.

(c) The Group of Ministers has recommended the constitution of an 'Apex Body' for management of maritime affairs including the vast strategic frontiers on the sea. No final decision has yet been taken on the recommendation.

Malpractices in defence canteens and stores

320. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the news-item titled "Rs. 25 lakh misappropriated from naval canteen by staff" appearing in the Hindustan Times dated 7th September, 2001;

(b) whether it is a fact that the sale of **a** large number of non-CSD items are prevalent in different canteens/stores run by the three different wings; and

(c) if so, the steps are being taken by Government to curb such malpractices?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERN ANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A limited number of non-CSD items as per requirements, are introduced in Canteens/stores by following the prescribed procedure.

(c) The report submitted by the Board of Inquiry constituted by NHQ to look into the alleged mis-appropriation from Naval canteen by staff is under consideration.

Skirmishes with infiltrators and neighbouring countries in defferent borders

† 321. SHRI MUNAVVAR HASAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the skirmishes with infiltrators and neighbouring countries on various borders of the country during the last three months;

(b) the details of the total loss of lives and property; and

(c) the details of the steps being taken to stop almost daily skirmishes on the border?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) There has been no confrontation along the border during the last three months (1st August to 31st October, 2001) except along the Line of Control in J & K. As per available record, a total of 250 infiltrators/terrorists have been killed in J & K LoC Sector. During the same period, 11 Indian Army Personnel were killed and 17 Army personnel were wounded on account of direct action (firing or otherwise) in this Sector.

Adequate steps have been taken to prevent/restrict infiltration from across the Line of Control. All routes of ingress/infiltration are

† Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.